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COUNTRY SHOULD "ERECT ITS OWN WALL" AROUND THE OIL TRADE. HE SAID ANY CONFERENCE WOULD DISCUSS A LONG TERM PLAN FOR OIL EXPORTS AND IMPORTS "ON A STABLE COST BASIS."

RACHKOV IS A WRITER ON FOREIGN TRADE AND PETROLEUM WHO ACTS AS A SEMI-OFFICIAL SPOKESMAN FOR THE SOVIETS ON THESE MATTERS. HE HAS BEEN USED IN THE PAST BY THE SOVIETS TO FLOAT TRAIL BALLOONS ON INTERNATIONAL OIL MATTERS.

ONE PURPOSE OF RACHKOV'S STATEMENTS MAY BE TO INDICATE THAT MOSCOW DOES NOT WANT TO BE EXCLUDED FROM INTERNATIONAL MEETINGS ON OIL. GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE THAT OIL HAS ASSUMED IN INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS, THE SOVIETS HAVE AN INTEREST IN PLAYING A ROLE IN DELIBERATIONS CONCERNING IT, BEYOND THE INTRINSIC IMPORTANCE OF THE SUBJECT. MOREOVER, THE SOVIETS MIGHT BE CONCERNED THAT ANY GROUPING OF OIL CONSUMING COUNTRIES COULD EFFECT THE PRICES IT RECEIVES FOR ITS OIL EXPORTS AND MIGHT HAVE SOME IMPACT ON ITS PLANS TO ACQUIRE WESTERN OIL TECHNOLOGY.

THE SOVIETS MIGHT SEEK TO EMPLOY PARTICIPATION IN ANY OIL NEGOTIATIONS TO ENHANCE THEIR POSITION WITH THE ARABS. THE

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SOVIETS HAVE PUBLICLY ATTACKED THE PROPOSED MEETING OF CONSUMING NATIONS AS AN ATTEMPT TO RESTORE A PATTERN OF EXPLOITATION OF THE PRODUCERS. MOSCOW COULD ARGUE THAT ITS PARTICIPATION IN OIL NEGOTIATIONS WOULD SERVE TO PROTECT ARAB INTERESTS AGAINST THE "IMPERIALISTS." AT A MINIMUM, THE SOVIETS MIGHT HOPE TO WIN SOME POINTS IN THE THIRD WORLD BY ARGUING THAT OIL IS TOO IMPORTANT TO BE LEFT TO THE LARGE INDUSTRIAL CONSUMER STATES.

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